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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Report listing advantages and disadvantages of 19 teaching procedures (e.g., lecture, role playing, auditory aids). Presents recommendations for choosing classroom methods and a selected bibliography on related topics.

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Seminar 2

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF CLASSROOM METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES AS RELATED TO IMPROVEMENT OF COLLEGE INSTRUCTION

A. The Problem

Initially, it had been the concern of Seminar 2 to study the very broad problem of improving college instruction. Realizing that the amount of working time alloted to seminar meetings was very limited, it was decided that the efforts of the group should be spent on studying one aspect of the problem, that of improving classroom methods, procedures and techniques. Other factors considered briefly that related themselves to the problem of improving college instruction were:

1. Class Size
2. Teaching Load
3. Student - Faculty Ratio
4. Evaluation of Instruction
5. Faculty Morale
6. Administrative Responsibility

B. Method of Procedure

Three suggestions for studying the problem were used:

1. That the group study current questions and concerns regarding college instruction, looking carefully at major considerations and premises that underlie these concerns.

2. That a list of classroom methods, procedures and techniques be compiled with emphasis on any new ones that might be discovered and/or any modifications of the traditional ones.

3. That a study of literature be made to determine what research has been done that would give support or merit or non-support to these teaching methods and procedures, as referred to in item 2 above.

Specific activities that were used in the procedure included book reports, the use of resource persons, tape recordings, and group discussions.

C. Current Concerns and Issues Regarding College Instruction

A study of literature revealed much valuable information that identified current concerns regarding college instruction. The major concern centered around the lessening influence of college instruction on student behavior - attitudes, values, and motives. College classes don't affect significantly student behavior nor do

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college students desire to think independently but are more inclined to comfortable conformity. Substantiating this concern might be the results of the recent study of Philip Jacobs, Changing Values in College: An Exploratory Study of the Impact of College Teaching. In this study, it was revealed that the values of American college students are remarkably homogeneous, considering the variety of their social, economic, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, and the relatively unrestricted opportunities they have had for freedom of thought and personal development. It was discovered that these students tend to think alike, feel alike, and believe alike.

Another concern is that present college teaching methods are inadequate to meet the demands of increasing college enrollments. Increasing enrollments have accounted for a more heterogeneous population of college students. With this heterogeneous population has come developing research in the field of human relations focused on the importance of attitudes and behavior. Some of this research has proved invalid certain assumptions regarding behavior and attitudinal changes.

Confusion over the goals of higher education is another concern related to college instruction. The general thinking seems to have been that education should have some conception of the goals aimed at and that these goals become the bases for developing criteria for organizing learning experiences. As to sources used for obtaining information that would result in this conception of educational goals, confusion was seen to still exist between prevailing philosophies of the Essentialists, the Neo-Humanists, the Progressives, and others.

In order that the group might form a working premise for subsequent discussions on methodology and learning, the following characteristics described learning experiences that seemed useful in attaining some logical goals of education:

1. Learning experiences to develop skills in thinking (thinking described as critical, logical, reflective, deductive).

2. Learning experiences helpful in acquiring information.

3. Learning experiences helpful in developing social attitudes.

4. Learning experiences helpful in developing interests.

Most pertinent to the discussions was a statement from Wilbert McKeachie's lecture on How Do College Students Learn: "The result of any type of method or procedure used to arrive at educational goals should be intellectually satisfying to students."

D. Some College Classroom Procedures, Techniques and Methods

The following list of classroom procedures have been compiled primarily for the purpose of studying their merits or advantages and their disadvantages. Some or all of these procedures might be employed in organizing course content materials into meaningful learning experiences.

1. **LECTURE** (formal or informal)

Advantages:

a. The lecture is good for teaching facts.

b. The lecture can be used to capitalize on information not readily available to students.

c. It is a means of reaching large numbers of students at little expense.

Disadvantages:

a. Where the lecture method is used, it is difficult to achieve any other kind of objectives other than factual learning.

b. The lecture method is too impersonal in its approach.

2. **ROLE PLAYING** (either by groups for presentation or by being assigned roles in the classroom procedures)

Advantages:

a. Present for discussion concrete and realistic examples.

b. Tend to develop interest and motivation.

c. Role playing can be an educative experience resulting in critical thinking.

Disadvantages:

a. Students have difficulty in playing roles realistically; sometimes the most important points are missed.

b. Role playing is time consuming it is preparation.

3. **BUZZ SESSIONS** (or some other form of discussion)

Advantages:

a. Increases small group participation.

b. Encourages self expression in small groups that might not prevail in larger groups.

Disadvantages:

a. One individual may tend to monopolize discussion periods. Coherence of thought is sometimes lost.

b. The buzz session is difficult for the instructor to guide.

4. WRITTEN REPORTS OR TERM PAPERS

Advantages:

a. Gives able students opportunities to do critical and constructive work.

b. Enables students to investigate areas of special interests.

Disadvantages:

a. They are often "borrowed."

b. They are time consuming for students to prepare.

c. They require too much time for teachers to read and evaluate.

5. INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH (where representatives from various disciplines approach a common topic from different points of view)

Advantages:

a. Purportedly helps students towards broader generalizations.

b. May broaden interests of both students and faculty.

c. Generally increases communication among faculty members.

d. Often results in greater variety within a course.

e. May decrease situations in which students and faculty members have personality clashes.

f. May permit an institution to employ a greater variety of specialists who otherwise could not be employed because there would not be enough course offerings in their fields to warrant their employment.

Disadvantages:

a. Some college teachers need more freedom in their teaching than is afforded by the tight scheduling in an interdisciplinary course.

b. Scheduling and pacing become a problem (especially regarding films, etc.)

c. Satisfactory texts are not usually available.

d. Some topics for study do not lend themselves readily to the interdisciplinary approach.

e. If all professors are to remain current with developments in the course, it is necessary for them to sit in on or have frequent meetings.

6. CLASS PROJECTS OR PRODUCTIONS (something that serves as a culmination)

Advantages:

a. Frequently develops an ingroup feeling and a greater sense of accomplishment.

b. Often provides worthwhile learning materials for future classes.

c. Frequently results in tangible materials that students may keep and use at a later date.

d. Sometimes convinces students of the value of group action.

e. Usually serves to make clearer to students the concepts under study.

Disadvantages:

a. Large projects are very time-consuming and may require time that allotted to other activities.

b. It is difficult to achieve an equitable sharing of responsibilities in any project.

c. Newness of the method often causes confusion among students who are not accustomed to using their own initiative.

7. USE OF RESOURCE PERSONS

Advantages:

a. The advantage of first hand information.

b. The resource person is likely to have more complete knowledge of matter being presented than the teacher.

c. A tendency to use too many resource persons is likely to interrupt the continuity of a course and tend to give the teacher a vacation.

d. If interview is combined with the use of the resource person, the results are likely to be less than satisfactory because students are not likely to be adept in asking questions.

e. A similar problem may arise in a question period following a presentation by a resource person.

8. COUNSELING AS A TEACHING TECHNIQUE

Advantages:

a. It is probably the only method which offers the possibility of self-knowledge as well as knowledge of external phenomena.

b. It may give instructors a much more candid view of the students he hopes to help through instruction.

c. It is probably the only way to solve many personal problems which are not shared by the rest of the class.

d. The personalized interests developed through counseling are often reflected in other phases of student's work.

Disadvantages:

a. Regular faculty members are frequently ill-equiped to serve as effective counselors.

b. Progress towards the solution of personal problems is frequently not possible without the assistance of psychological instruments.

c. It is often difficult to distinguish between problems which require psycho-therapy and those which can be handled effectively by an untrained faculty member.

d. Counseling is a very time-consuming activity.

9. CASE METHODS

Advantages:

a. Provides opportunity for applying course principles in life-like situations.

b. Facilitates active student involvement.

c. Provides an approach to objectives other than factual learning.

d. Students take responsibility for their own learning.

Disadvantages:

a. Case method may not lead to a logically organized body of understandings.

b. Case method is not as efficient as other methods in communicating a number of facts.

10. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Advantages:

a. Enables students to see the problems and behavior of many kinds of people in their everyday setting.

b. Promotes skill in problem-solving.

c. Activities afforded by this participation are valuable in the development of the whole individual because they provide training in personal traits as well as training of the intellect.

Disadvantages:

a. These activities require more time away from school and the classroom.

b. Adequate supervision becomes a problem.

c. Community facilities are sometimes limited.

11. PANEL, FORUM OR SYMPOSIUM

Advantages:

a. Encourage student participation.

b. Encourage students to project ideas informally.

c. Stimulates independent and critical thinking.

Disadvantages:

a. Difficulty in keeping interest of entire group.

b. Since responsibility lies heavy on one person, participants are inclined to let leaders carry the load.

c. Working with inexperienced people usually requires extensive coaching.

12. TUTORIAL ARRANGEMENTS

See "Independent Study as a Teaching Technique."

13. DRAMATIZATION

Advantages:

a. It usually gives participants an intimate understanding of the meaning of the situation they are presenting.

b. It may have a therapeutic value for those who play roles of characters with traits that have been almost "incomprehensible." By identifying closely with the character and the feelings they are attempting to project to the audience a more complete understanding and empathy may develop.

c. Like any other project in which a class may engage, the dramatization requires much cooperative effort and a sense of teamwork. The final product serves as concrete evidence, underlining a sense of accomplishment. It may even be used for instructional purposes with other groups.

Disadvantages:

a. It is usually a very time-consuming activity, requiring collection of props, rehearsals, and many other responsibilities which may not lend themselves to scheduled class periods.

b. The number of ideas and concepts which may be considered by the class in the course of the quarter or semester is greatly limited because the play cannot include more than a few central ideas.

c. Few classes include enough talented performers to provide a finished production.

14. DEMONSTRATION (by instructor, student, or another class of students - as in a laboratory school)

Advantages:

a. The demonstration places greater emphasis upon the process or procedure.

b. When the process or procedure is of major importance, demonstrations should be of particular value as a teaching technique.

c. The movement employed in the demonstration and the gradual unfolding of anticipated or unanticipated results generally adds interest.

Disadvantages:

a. Some processes and complex phenomena do not lend themselves to demonstration because the phenomena is not tangible enough for demonstration or too difficult for the student to follow (as when there are multiple facets which only lend confusion).

b. Since most demonstrations are dramatic performances as well, they require demonstrators with some dramatic ability.

c. The learner is removed from the actual process in most demonstrations. This constitutes a negative value, especially when visibility is difficult.

15. INDEPENDENT STUDY AS A TEACHING TECHNIQUE

Advantages:

a. The most frequent value is the development of the ability to work resourcefully or creatively independently.

b. An opportunity to probe intensively into an area of special interest; the opportunity to learn research techniques.

c. The most frequently mentioned value for the faculty adviser is that independent study on the part of students broadens the adviser's knowledge of the field.

d. Also mentioned by the faculty adviser is: the opportunity for closer contact with students, the satisfaction of helping students develop scholarly interests and competences, and the opportunity to evaluate educational needs and achievements more adequately.

Disadvantages:

a. Independent study may lack sufficient guidance.

b. There exists possibilities of procrastination.

c. There may be the feeling that the project is not so demanding or rewarding as a course.

d. There may exist limited library and laboratory facilities.

e. Independent Study places a heavy burden on a teacher's time and energy.

16. VISUAL AIDS (models, exhibits, graphic materials, specimens, films, slides, field trips, illustrations)

Advantages:

a. Visual aids can make clear to students certain relationships which are difficult to comprehend through the exclusive use of verbal symbols.

b. They can show at a glance changes which take place over a long period of time.

c. They can consolidate into one meaningful whole the relationship between one phenomena or object and other objects.

d. They can demonstrate vividly steps that have been or should be followed in a process.

Disadvantages:

a. Sometimes they are costly and time-consuming in preparing and ordering them.

b. There is a distinct danger of lulling students into acceptance of a point of view rather than promoting critical thinking, for visual aids frequently present a position or an idea for acceptance.

c. Inasmuch as the instructor cannot find pictures or films to illustrate all aspects of a country or some equally complex phenomena, there is some danger that students will get an over-simplified concept through the use of only a few visual aids.

17. DEBATE

See "Panel, Forum or Symposium."

18. AUDITORY AIDS (tape recordings, ready made or making them in class, radio broadcasts, etc.)

Advantages:

a. There is the advantage of immediacy. One can listen in on an event as it happens.

b. Radio brings dramatic feeling into the classroom through the use of the human voice.

c. Radio can be used inexpensively; because it reaches many people, its per capita cost is small.

d. Expertness in methods is also provided by the radio.

e. Recordings offer a great range of helpful materials. Unlike the radio, they can be pre-heard and evaluated.

f. Recordings are to the ear what pictures are to the eye.

Disadvantages:

a. Listening requires concentration, because the listener's attention is held only by the sound.

b. Problems arise when attempts are made to schedule some radio programs to fit the needs of specific classes at specific times.

c. Operation and upkeep of auditory aids sometimes prove very expensive.

d. There may be a tendency on the part of students to accept other people's opinions without critical analysis.

19. MIMEOGRAPHED MATERIALS (course outlines, points of view by various writers, etc.)

Advantages:

a. Mimeographed materials can reach a large number of students with the same information at a relatively low cost.

b. These materials can be read at a suitable time under conditions suitable to the reader.

c. Reading is an efficient way of learning. Most of total knowledge is acquired through reading.

d. Much valuable information can be preserved through mimeographed materials.

e. Course outlines often represent a superior form of ideas. They often contain much clarifying information concerning course objectives, course activities, assignments and bibliographical information.

Disadvantages:

a. Mimeographed materials must often times be adapted to the level of the reader. It is difficult to adjust to the several reading levels usually found in any class.

b. There is no guarantee that students will read the materials.

c. Mimeographed materials are much less personable than a conversation inter-change.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations

Much of the information included in the report is not new or profound. There is a vast amount of material that has been written concerning principles of methodology and instruction. The concern of the seminar has been to add emphasis to the fact that there are numerous techniques, procedures and methods that lend themselves to effective classroom instruction.

The fact is recognized that a good teacher uses a variety of techniques and procedures. In keeping with current trends, the seminar recommends that more effort should be placed on the implementation of those techniques and procedures that are student-centered in their approach.

In choosing a method, however, there are certain factors to be considered:

1. The method chosen must be adapted to the student's level of interest and ability.
2. The method must be adapted to the subject itself.
3. There must be teacher adaptability - the teacher must feel confident and at ease when using a technique or method.
4. The method must be adapted to the goals of the class.

As a final recommendation, the seminar suggests that further study be made by future workshop groups on devising ways and means of encouraging college teachers to put into actual use a variety of these methods, procedures and techniques as well as any others that show merit.

The members of Seminar 2 were:

A. G. Kirby, Chairman
Grace D. Wiley, Recorder
Donald Barnes
Daniel Neall
Linford A. Marquart
Don Davies, Consultant
Thomas Stovall, Consultant